

● (1250)

[English]

Mr. Peter Stollery (Spadina): Mr. Speaker, I thank you very much for giving me an opportunity—

Mr. Breaux: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I just want the record to show that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Crosbie) was not here to move his motion.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I refer the hon. member to another citation in *Beauchesne* which says that it is not permissible for hon. members to raise points of order to signify to the House the presence or absence of members.

An hon. Member: Shame!

Mr. Stollery: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for this opportunity to make a contribution to this very significant debate on borrowing authority. I think it is worth noting that one of the reasons we are discussing at some length the ability of the government to arrange credit of \$7 billion is that none of us has any idea what kind of budget the government will be bringing to Parliament. We are having pretty much of a replay of the debate which took place a year ago. I think any taxpaying citizen should look through the House of Commons debates for Tuesday, October 24, 1978 and read the speech by the present Minister of Finance (Mr. Crosbie), who was then just the hon. member for St. John's West.

I do not think we should make too much of the fact that the government is floating without any real sense of direction. We cannot comment too much on that until we see a budget, but we can comment on the way the then hon. member for St. John's West went on with regard to this same bill. What day is it today?

Mr. Knowles: October 26.

Mr. Stollery: On October 26 of this year we have an exact reversal of speeches which were made last year on October 24. At that time the present Minister of Finance was giving a grandiose performance with regard to the collecting of taxes from one John C. Doyle. I gather there has been some settlement of this matter, but as I read through the minister's remarks I wondered whether now that he is Minister of Finance he has actually pursued the matter about which he was so accusative of various governments a year ago. We all know the Minister of Finance is a very colourful and entertaining member of the House of Commons. He has had to bear some rather grim burdens for the last little while, which he blames on everyone but himself.

If there is one characteristic of this government about which the public is very aware, it is that for five and a half months we have been treated to a bag of clichés about strengthening Parliament, but we are now seeing the opposite. We are seeing that in many ways. We could read *Hansard*, specifically the remarks made by the Minister of Finance when he was first elected to the House. I am sure that what we are seeing now will be going on for months. On March 9, 1978 the present Minister of Finance was talking about exchange rates, and he asked the then minister of finance the following question:

Borrowing Authority

Is the Minister of Finance now stating the government of Canada has no responsibility for the monetary policy and that only the governor of the Bank of Canada has that responsibility, and does he agree with the governor of the Bank of Canada in his statement yesterday—

My goodness, for years *Hansard* has been filled with such remarks! We could change the names and reverse the comments, but the questions would be the same.

Mr. Rae: That is exactly what we have been saying for the past 30 years.

Mr. Stollery: Members of the New Democratic Party, of course, have other solutions, but we never hear what they are. We hear about things like the West German economy. In West Germany, of course, there are wage and price controls, and that is one of the reasons the West Germans have a low rate of inflation, but the New Democratic Party certainly is not propounding wage and price controls in Canada.

Mr. Rae: You don't know what you are talking about.

Mr. Stollery: There are examples and more examples of questions, comments and debate in which positions have been reversed.

The inconsistent, confused and vague group of individuals who make up the Government of Canada were elected on May 22 because they told the people of Canada that they had new ideas. Where are they?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. It being one o'clock, I do now leave the chair until 2 p.m.

At one o'clock the House took recess.

● (1400)

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

Mr. Stollery: Mr. Speaker, I think it should be noted that the governing party does not have very many members in the House this afternoon; I see only one cabinet minister. If this is an indication of what we can expect from this government, they should take notice that as the official opposition we on this side will continually make the following point to the Canadian public. After all the talk about parliamentary democracy, and after all the rather meaningless and inane comments by the Prime Minister (Mr. Clark) about returning power to the House of Commons, we find on this parliamentary day only one minister of the Crown present in the House.

I should like to continue the remarks I was making just before the luncheon break about the way this government, the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, have continually told us for the last two weeks that all of the problems of Canada were created by the previous government, yet at the same time this government continues those policies of which it says the previous government was guilty. I believe that is one reason the Canadian public is disenchanted with this government that was elected on May 22 with a mandate to develop some new ideas. The Canadian public has a right to expect some clear and new directions from this government rather than this